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International Area Studies

Saint Mary's College of California

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INTERNATIONAL AREA STUDIES

The international area studies (IAS) major is designed for students preparing for an increasingly global environment through the multidisciplinary study of a world region. The course of study integrates several academic disciplines, language proficiency, cultural literacy, independent research, and residential experience abroad.

The IAS major is geared toward students who want to focus their major program of study on a geographical regional interest instead of a single academic discipline. This interdisciplinary approach best facilitates the student's gain in cultural literacy, language acquisition, and the ability to understand and analyze critically a selected world region from multiple academic perspectives. The IAS major requires maturity and a sense of adventure and is designed for those who appreciate and look forward to living in a larger, more globalized world.

This is a highly individualized program, aimed both at satisfying students' interests and at preparing them for positions requiring a strong international background. Students work closely with a faculty advisor throughout their program who help them organize the details of their personalized program.

FACULTY ADVISORY BOARD

Ronald Ahnen, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Politics,
Director of International Area Studies
Ravi Bhandari, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Economics
Jennifer Heung, Ph.D., Associate Professor
of Anthropology
Helga Lénárt-Cheng, Ph.D., Adjunct Assistant Professor
of Modern Languages (French and Spanish)
Alvaro Ramirez, Ph.D., Professor of Modern Languages
(Spanish)
María Luisa Ruiz, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Modern
Languages (Spanish)
E. Elena Songster, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of the International Area Studies Program will demonstrate:

- **APPRECIATION** of their place as a citizen in global society.
- **UNDERSTANDING** of the political, economic and cultural interconnectedness that constitutes our world today.
- **ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE** at a basic functional level of proficiency in a language, other than English, specific to their geographical region of study.
- **ABILITY TO ANALYZE** specific social aspects of a geographical region employing in a competent and creative way the appropriate conceptual and theoretical tools of the following disciplines: anthropology, economics, history, literature and art, and politics.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

REGION SELECTION

Students select a region of the world in which they have a particular interest and will concentrate their studies. Four choices are available: East Asia, Europe, Latin America, and a student defined region such as Africa that is selected by the student with the approval of the Director of International Area Studies.

LOWER DIVISION

Students must complete the following five courses:
Anthropology 1: Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology
Economics 3: Principles of Micro-Economics
Economics 4: Principles of Macro-Economics
History 2: World History
Politics 1: Introduction to Comparative Politics

UPPER DIVISION

Students must complete the following six courses:
IAS 100 Cultural Geography and Global Societies
IAS 196 Independent Study–Senior Thesis
One each from the following four disciplines according to regional concentration:

	East Asia	Europe	Latin America
Anthropology	ANTH 121: China	ANTH 121: Europe	ANTH 121: Central America or Latin America
History	HIST 160, 161, 162	HIST 110, 115, 116, 117	HIST 150, 151, 152, 153, 154
Literature and Art	check with Director for appropriate courses	ENG 103, 104, 144, 160, 161; FREN 121, 122, 123; SPAN 120, 121, 122, 127, 160 or MODL 187; MODL 186	SPAN 140, 141, 143, 145; MODL 188, 189
Politics	POL 144	POL 146	POL 145

Note: Students must take ANTH 121 when the content is on their region.

DEPARTMENTAL CONCENTRATION

In addition to the above courses, IAS majors must complete the requirements of a minor area of study chosen from anthropology, economics, history, modern languages or politics. The choice of minor provides a key focus for the student and aids in their preparation for the senior thesis, which generally is written in that field. In addition, students often pursue a graduate degree in their minor field.

LANGUAGE

Students must complete the equivalent of level four (4) semesters in a foreign language appropriate to the region they select. Language study should correspond with the country where students wish to spend their study abroad.

STUDY ABROAD

Study abroad is a vital component to the IAS major and provides students with an important experience that allows them to truly understand the cultural complexities and lived experiences of their chosen region. The interdisciplinary and language courses taken by students will prepare them for exceptionally enriching cultural experiences. A student's choice of country should correspond with their language study. Majors are strongly encouraged to spend a minimum of one semester studying abroad in their selected region during their junior year. While abroad, students pursue a research project selected in consultation with their advisor that will help form the basis for the senior thesis.

SENIOR THESIS

On their return, students complete a thesis based on their research project as a one credit independent study course (196). Students write their thesis under the supervision of an advisor selected from the IAS faculty governing board of their minor discipline or another faculty member with approval of the director.

MINIMUM GPA

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required for declaring an international area studies major.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Graduates will be in a position to work for the ever-growing number of international agencies, organizations and businesses. Increasingly, language proficiency and overseas experience are requirements for jobs. Employers seek persons experienced and qualified to function in another language and culture.

Others go on to graduate school in international business, international studies, or in their minor field. Most major universities have graduate area studies programs that offer a natural next step for students interested in further developing their expertise.

Beyond career advancement, many students will find that the immersion in another culture expands their understanding of the human experience and permanently enriches their lives.

Any course listed for this major that requires a prerequisite assumes a grade of C– or better in the prerequisite course. In addition, C is the minimum acceptable grade in **IAS 100** and **IAS 196** for credit toward the major.

CORE COURSES

100 Cultural Geography and Global Societies

This course exposes students to the breadth and excitement of the field of geography. Cultural geography studies the ways people shape and give meaning to their environment and allows us to look at the fascinating variety of human activity in the world—the human landscape. Geographic knowledge is vital to understanding national and international issues that dominate daily news reports. This course examines the relevance of geographic methods and concepts to social science topics such as agricultural patterns and practices, architecture, ethnic traditions and conflicts, gender, health, migration, population, political economy, poverty, religion, resource utilization, social change and urban planning.

Prerequisite: Anthropology 1.

This course may only be completed at Saint Mary's College.

196 Independent Study: Senior Thesis

As a culmination of their studies, students are required to work independently with a faculty member to complete a senior thesis. The thesis should display a student's ability to conduct independent research, and to write and think critically about salient issues related to their chosen minor and region. Sponsorship by an IAS faculty advisory board member (associated with the student's minor) and approval by the program director is required. This course should be taken in the senior year.

This course may only be completed at Saint Mary's College.